🡪 This rubric is to be adapted to a 50-point or 100-point scale.

🕱 Excessive mechanical errors or syntax issues may drop your score to a lower tier!

**Tier 7: Exemplary (97 – 100%)**

An essay in this range responds to the prompt clearly, directly, and fully. Arguments are organized efficiently and logically. The coherent, compelling thesis statement is consistently supported by relevant details and ideally selected textual evidence. Analysis is cogent, precise, and insightful. The essay employs subtlety in its use of the text and the writer’s style is fluent and flexible. Diction and syntax are sophisticated yet efficient, with a fluid and thorough use of transitions. It is virtually free of mechanical errors.

**Tier 6: Strong (90-96%)**

An essay in this range responds to the prompt clearly and directly, with somewhat less depth than a Tier 7 paper. The thesis statement is clear and defensible. Supporting details are consistently used. The analysis offers a valid interpretation of the text but may provide less insight than a Tier 7 paper. The use of the text is competent but not subtle; quotations are judiciously selected. The writer’s style conveys a mastery of language and is clear and direct. There are few if any mechanical errors.

**Tier 5: Good (83-89%)**

An essay in this range addresses the prompt, but the strength and focus of the argument varies. The thesis is relevant but may be worded with less subtlety or specificity than in the higher-scoring papers. Supporting details are present but may lack consistency or depth. Selection of textual evidence is competent but not ideal. Analysis of textual evidence clearly identifies literary elements and rhetorical/poetic devices, but the breakdown of the text may contain gaps in development or logic. The writer’s style is clear and functional. The few mechanical errors present do not interfere with meaning.

**Tier 4: Adequate (77-82%)**

An essay in this range addresses the prompt, but the strength and focus of the argument varies. The thesis is identifiable but may struggle with specificity or clarity of intent. Main ideas and supporting details may focus on the plot at the expense of analysis. Textual evidence is provided, but is treated with less subtlety and specificity than in the higher-scoring papers. Quotations may advance the plot at the expense of providing material for analysis. Literary elements and rhetorical/poetic devices are identified but are not analyzed to their fullest extent. The writer’s style is competent but not fluent. Mechanical errors and syntax issues are evident.

**Tier 3: Developing (73-76%)**

An essay in this range has a general focus but may not fulfill the demands of the prompt. The thesis statement, while being on-topic, fails to clearly and thoroughly articulate an argument. Main ideas and supporting details may be cursory or exclusively plot-based. Textual evidence may be sparing or inconsistent. Analysis is attempted but fails in some way competently examine the textual evidence. The writer’s style is uneven in development, with lapses in organization, clarity, syntax, and mechanics. (Essays in this range often read more like a book report than a textual analysis.)

**Tier 2: Needs attention (67-72%)**

An essay in this range exhibits many gaps in development. The argument may be only tangentially related to the prompt. The thesis statement is rudimentary or difficult to locate. Main ideas are simplistic and are not supported with adequate detail. Textual evidence is used sparingly or erroneously, and is treated without subtlety. Analysis is cursory and does not address literary elements or rhetorical/poetic devices. The writer’s style is undeveloped, with syntactical and grammatical errors interfering with meaning.

**Tier 1: Inadequate (60-66%)**

An essay in this range is missing several components. The thesis is vague and/or does not address the prompt. The thesis may be misplaced or difficult to locate. The organizational structure of the essay is faulty and does not clearly move from the general to the specific. Textual evidence is used sparingly, if at all. Analysis is not present or is fundamentally inadequate. Syntactical and grammatical errors are a widespread distraction in the essay.

**Tier 0: Failing (59-0%)**

Papers receiving this score fail to fulfill the basic expectations of an essay. There is little or no effort on display, and the writing has no discernible structure or argument.

Adapted from Carol Jago’s “A 9-Point Rubric for writing about literature”